

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 4: Assessment	Effective Date: May 1, 2009
	Section 26: Determining Service Levels and Transitioning to Ongoing Services	Version: 3

POLICY

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will intervene in the lives of children and families at the least intrusive level possible, given the assessment findings and circumstances of each case. **[NEW]** See Practice Guidance for factors that may aid DCS in the assessment of domestic violence situations.

DCS will make a determination about the family's initial service needs and offer services as early in the assessment as possible, in order to assure child safety and well-being.

[NEW] DCS will provide information about available community resources to all families where domestic violence has been identified as a risk factor.

The assessing Family Case Manager (FCM) will continue to monitor the safety and well-being of the child until the case is formally transferred to another FCM via a transition meeting.

Code References

[IC 34-6-2-34.5: Domestic or family violence](#)

PROCEDURE

The FCM will complete the following after determining the family's risk level and needs level:

1. Examine the Service Level Matrix (see Related Information) for direction on the appropriate service level to offer the child and family;
2. Examine the Service Type Matrix (see Related Information) for direction on the appropriate type of services to offer the child and family;
3. Use critical thinking and evaluate the appropriateness of the level and type of services indicated by the matrices and arrive at a recommendation;
4. Consult with his or her Supervisor;
5. With supervisory approval, implement any services necessary to assure the child's safety and well-being. See separate policy, [5.10 Family Services](#);
6. Continue to monitor the safety and well-being of the child through regular contact and:
 - a. Begin the transition to ongoing services by requesting that a case be created. See separate policy, [5.1 Transitioning from Assessment](#), or
 - b. Participate in an internal transition meeting where the responsibility for monitoring the child's safety and well-being will be formally transferred to a separate ongoing services FCM. See separate policy, [5.1 Transitioning from Assessment](#).

The Supervisor will review and approve the FCM's recommendations regarding the level and type of services.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

[NEW] Factors Which May Suggest That A Child Can Remain Safe in the Home

1. Non-offending parent acknowledges risk to child(ren) and demonstrates protective capacities;
2. Non-offending parent and child(ren) are in a shelter or other safe location;
3. Alleged domestic violence offender's access to the child(ren) and non-offending parent or activities are restricted (e.g., in jail, complying with protective order, or no-contact order);
4. Alleged domestic violence offender demonstrating responsibility for his or her behavior and actively engaging in intervention programs;
5. Child(ren) show minimal behavioral or emotional effects from the domestic violence;
6. Child(ren) have a supportive adult in the home;
7. An older child(ren) has a plan to be safe and the ability to carry out the plan;
8. Violence is not escalating and alleged domestic violence offender's prior history does not include known serious violence;
9. Other issues (substance abuse, mental health, etc.) do not pose safety threats; and
10. Non-offending parent has supportive extended family or community ties.

[NEW] If the non-offending parent is remaining with the offender, consider the following:

1. Will the child(ren) be safe if they remain in the home?
2. In an emergency, what works best to keep the child(ren) safe?
3. Who can the non-offending parent call in a crisis?
4. Would the non-offending parent call the police if the violence started again? Is there a phone in the house? Could the non-offending parent work out a signal with the child(ren) or neighbors to call the police or get help?
5. If the child(ren) and/or non-offending parent need to leave the home, where can they go?

[NEW] Factors which may suggest that a child needs an out-of-home placement:

1. No other workable plan can be put in place that ensures child safety;
2. Other types of child abuse create safety threats;
3. Alleged domestic violence offender continues to expose child(ren) to serious violence despite intervention;
4. Alleged domestic violence offender continues to have unauthorized contact with child(ren) which present safety concerns;
5. Alleged domestic violence offender's history includes known serious domestic violence;
6. Child(ren) has reduced ability to manage circumstances or has conditions that increase vulnerability; and/or
7. Adult abuse of alcohol or other drugs presents additional safety threats.

An out-of-home placement for cases involving domestic violence is usually unnecessary. An out-of-home placement should only be considered when all other means of safety have been considered and offered; when the child(ren) are at imminent risk of placement; or the non-offending parent is unable to protect the children or accept services.

FORMS AND TOOLS

N/A

RELATED INFORMATION

Determining Service Level

By examining the risk level in the context of the needs level, a determination can be made about the level of services that is appropriate for the child and family.

Service Level Matrix		RISK LEVEL			
		LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	VERY HIGH
NEEDS LEVEL	HIGH	Moderate	High	Very High	Very High
	MODERATE	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
	LOW	Low	Moderate	High	Very High

Determining Service Type

After the service level has been calculated, the FCM considers the appropriate service type:

Service Type Matrix		No Services or Community-Based Services (non DCS-monitored)	Informal Adjustment	Child in Need of Services (in /out-of-home?)
Service Level	(1) Low	✓		
	(2) Moderate		✓	
	(3) High		✓	✓
	(4) Very High		✓	✓

No services needed: Children are assessed as safe. There is no (or extremely low) risk to the child and the family is able to manage any risk issues using its own strengths and resources.

Referral for community-based services: There is low risk to the child but the family is not able to manage risk issues using its own strengths and resources. However, the family is able to use community resources for support without ongoing DCS case management services. DCS involvement is limited to actively linking the family with those services and resources that effectively and safely address its needs.

Informal Adjustment (IA): An IA may be appropriate for children in families where risk levels range from moderate to very high, but coercive intervention of the courts is not needed. DCS will work with the family to develop the terms of the IA, monitor participation in services, and regularly evaluate the child's safety. The courts must approve the IA. Consequences for not complying may include, but are not limited to, court intervention, such as filing a Child in Need of Services (CHINS) petition.

CHINS: DCS may file a CHINS petition (highest level of intervention) for children in families where the risk level is high or very high and coercive intervention of the court is needed to assure the child's safety and well-being. The child may stay in the home or be placed in substitute care. The court monitors the case, including the case plan and permanency goal.

Consequences for parental noncompliance with the Case Plan and permanency goal may include, but are not limited to, a placement in out-of-home care, and in the most extreme circumstances, termination of parental rights.